Make It RREAL! Problem-Based Learning Across the Disciplines

Applying for the 2013-2014 Problem-Based Learning Cohort

What You Need to Know
Do you want to add zest to your classes? Re-energize your teaching? Get students hooked on learning? Consider adding a dash of problem-based learning to your courses.

Problem-based learning (PBL), the focus of the college’s Quality Enhancement Plan, is an active learning strategy in which students work together in teams to solve real world problems. Each year -- from Fall, 2012 through Fall, 2015 -- full-time and part-time faculty from across the disciplines can apply to join a PBL cohort. Faculty selected for the cohort will spend the year participating in on-going professional development that will enable them to implement problem-based learning activities in one or more of their courses.

Who is eligible?
Any full-time or part-time faculty member interested in learning about and applying PBL approaches is invited to apply. Knowledge of problem-based learning is not necessary. You will be learning about this strategy through your participation in the cohort experience.

What responsibilities will cohort members have?
1) Attend the Summer PBL Institute held at Palo Alto College from Wednesday, May 22 through Friday, May 24, 2013. The three day Institute will meet daily from 9:00-4:00 and will be conducted by experienced PBL faculty from the University of Delaware’s Center for Transforming Undergraduate Education. The instructors will provide an overview of problem-based learning and assist faculty in designing a discipline-specific problem-based learning activity.

2) Implement a problem-based learning activity in at least one course during Fall 2013 and Spring 2014.

3) Participate in monthly teaching circles and professional development activities during the 2013 – 2014 academic year that support PBL instructors.

4) Assist in grading the Critical Thinking Assessment Test during summer, 2014.

4) Present their PBL experiences to faculty at designated college-wide or departmental professional development events.

5) Document their experiences in journal form.

6) Act as PBL ambassadors in their departments to model PBL strategies and to support other department faculty interested in PBL.

What benefits will cohort members receive?
1) On-campus professional development in PBL. Participants will receive PBL resources (books, articles, etc.) to support these activities.

2) Funding to attend one national conference related to problem-based learning.

3) Cohort participation fulfills the committee responsibilities required annually of full-time faculty. In addition, cohort participation will contribute significantly toward promotion and tenure.

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When will the cohort begin and end?
Members of the cohort will attend the PBL Summer Institute prior to initiating PBL activities in their classrooms in the fall. The cohort will remain together as a group until the following summer when individuals will: 1) participate in grading the Critical Thinking Assessment Test and 2) be invited to attend a second summer institute to share their experiences with the next PBL cohort.

How do I apply?
Complete the attached form and return it to Joseph Coppola in Executive Offices #126 or e-mail the completed form to jcoppola2@alamo.edu by **February 15, 2013**. Members of the 2013-2014 PBL cohort will be announced in mid-March.
Application Form for 2013-2014 PBL Participants

Name: 
Discipline: 

Years of teaching experience: 
Years of teaching at PAC: 

Department: 
___Full-time   ___Part-time 

Phone Number: 
E-mail: 

Please be clear, concise and substantive in your responses to the following questions.

1. Why are you interested in becoming a member of the problem-based learning cohort?

2. The college’s QEP slogan is: Relevance + Reflection + Engagement = Active Learning. How does this formula relate to your own beliefs as a teacher? Provide an example to support your insights.

3. Have you used group learning, active learning or collaborative learning in your courses? If so, briefly describe your experience.

4. What do you consider your greatest strength as an instructor? Provide one example.

5. Group dynamics are a necessary part of cohort membership. Discuss one personal quality you possess that you feel will help sustain the group throughout its year long experience.

6. What do you most hope to gain from the cohort experience and why?

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